

## **Oklahoma City and Moore tornado and wind event**

### **March 25, 2015**

*Summary information released 2 p.m. March 26, 2015*

While survey teams are still evaluating what happened late yesterday in Oklahoma City and Moore, here's what we at the National Weather Service Norman Forecast Office know as of right now:

#### **Timeline**

6:32 PM	NWS Norman issued a severe thunderstorm warning for OKC and Moore
6:35 PM	Estimated time when the tornado developed in SW OKC
6:41 PM	NWS Norman issued a tornado warning for SW OKC
6:43 PM	NWS Norman issued a tornado warning for Moore

**Widespread wind damage.** As storms approached the southwest side of the Oklahoma City metro area, meteorologists were concerned a surge of very strong winds could produce widespread damage and power outages. Those winds did occur and widespread damage resulted. Our decision to issue a tornado warning was based on spotters and reports relayed by the media. Those reports, combined with an improved radar signature, helped pinpoint the location for the warning.

**Complicated forecast.** Situations like the one on March 25 are complicated, and the storms that produced the damage are difficult to anticipate and extremely difficult to warn for. They are not uncommon in Oklahoma. Fortunately, tornadoes that happen in these scenarios represent the *lower end* of the tornado intensity spectrum and don't pose the same dangers when compared to the tornadoes we saw back in May 2013.

**Hurricane-force wind and tornado damage.** It's clear we had a tornado in Moore, but it's also fairly certain a large amount of the damage was caused by hurricane force straight line winds on the south side of the large supercell thunderstorm. It's likely we had multiple small very brief tornadoes within this much broader area of damaging winds. We'll know more when survey teams finish their work later today (Thursday).

**Integrated warning team works.** It's important to remember National Weather Service tornado warnings are one part of an integrated warning system that also includes the local broadcast media and city and county emergency management officials. This warning system is designed with multiple layers. This means, for example, if a trained storm spotter reports a tornado, many communities have the ability to activate their own local warning systems, including outdoor warning devices with or without an official NWS tornado warning. Anytime your community's outdoor warning sirens are sounded, or you feel threatened by a storm, it's an indication that you need to go to a safe place and seek additional information, regardless of whether a tornado warning is in effect.

**Have a plan and be ready to act quickly.** Events that happen quickly like this underscore the importance of having a severe weather safety plan so that you can act quickly to stay safe. As we head into severe weather season, take this opportunity to review your plan and be sure you know what to do to keep you and your family safe.